

OUR OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION
& HISTORY

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

SURVEY NUMBER: BA-2543
Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☒ no

BALTIMORE COUNTY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Hutzler Brothers' Store, Towson

and/or common Hutzler's

2. Location

street & number E, Joppa Road & Dulaney Valley Road

☐ not for publication

city, town Towson

☐ vicinity of

Councilmanic District 4th
congressional district 2nd

state Maryland

county Baltimore County

3. Classification

Category

☐ district
☒ building(s)
☐ structure
☐ site
☐ object

Ownership

☐ public
☐ private
☐ both
Public Acquisition
☐ in process
☐ being considered
☒ not applicable

Status

☐ occupied
☒ unoccupied
☐ work in progress
Accessible
☒ yes: restricted
☐ yes: unrestricted
☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture
☐ commercial
☐ educational
☐ entertainment
☐ government
☐ industrial
☐ military
☐ museum
☐ park
☐ private residence
☐ religious
☐ scientific
☐ transportation
☒ other: idle

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Joppa Associates

Suite 700

street & number 4350 Lajolla Vill Drive

telephone no.:

city, town San Diego

state and zip code California 92122

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.

County Courts Building

liber 7855

street & number

401 Bosley Avenue

folio 797

city, town

Towson

state MD 21204

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title No previous study

date

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Hutzler Brothers' 1951-1952 store has been called Art Deco but is really a blend of Depression Modern (or Thirties Style) with the International Style. The structure that opened on November 24, 1952, is not precisely the building that is seen today. The original building was designed to be best appreciated from its parking lot with two bands of windows displaying the activity inside the basement and ground-floor shopping areas. A shorter band of windows broke the masonry band of the third level and served to provide the diners in the tea room with a panorama of the Goucher campus and the pine trees and blue water at Hampton Cove of Loch Raven. Emphasis was on the horizontal lines and the great width of the building---some 560 feet of glass visible at the Joppa Road level, 280 feet at ground level. The glass and the vast expanse of white glazed brick two stories high helped de-emphasize the rather large, dark-walled penthouse, and huge, block-like elevator tower. The corners of the building were rounded in the airflow tradition of the Thirties Style. Further horizontal effect was provided by a complete skirting of awnings on metal supports all around the building.

There are no Art Deco elements such as the densely inscribed geometric lines, bronze grilles, green verde-antique marble panels, or rooftop spikes and finials as seen on the Hutzler Tower Building (1931-1932) or the Maryland National Bank (1929)--which even had stylized gargoyles. The characteristics of the Depression Modern-Thirties Style were neatly summed up by Martin Greif in a 1975 book devoted to that period. (1)

Today's Hutzler's or ex-Hutzler's is more like a warehouse with round corners. The construction of a covered parking deck obscured the view of the entire series of levels from the north (or Towson Plaza) facade, destroying the effect of three or four parallel bands. The addition of another story in 1967 added more height to the visual aspect, weakening the horizontal effect. The upward growth of the building resulted in plugging up many of the street-level windows--said to be necessary at the time for support, adding to the "band-box" effect. The original building was L-shaped--mainly because elderly house owners refused to sell when the developers were buying up Shealey Avenue lots. The present building is an irregular, four-sided figure with rounded corners.

The glowing description of the modern masterpiece of 1952 has to be tempered with the realization that much of the effect intended has been sacrificed to expansion. In 1967, who could have thought that a 15-year-old functional building was too perfect to tamper with.

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Some of the features noted by Baltimore magazine in 1952 were:

The result is a clean-cut, well-proportioned building whose sweeping, horizontal lines dominate the crest of the ridge above the Goucher College Campus and the pleasant valley beyond. Not only is the building well adapted to this setting--it is literally built into it. Two upper floor levels rise above the highway; a third and lower level extends under the highway to a huge parking field which forms the heart of future shopping center.....

Customers coming by car arrive at the lower level field from Dulaney Valley Road or Joppa Road, choose a car space, and then enter the building via this entrance.

The upper level is enclosed in a band of off-white brick, rounded at street corners, and pierced on the north by the floor to ceiling window of the Valley View Room, and unusual modern restaurant. Elsewhere along its 560-foot length, this wall acts as a background for large, freestanding vertical signs. All sign letters are separately mounted on square panels. By day, each sign has black letters set against gray background panels; at night, these same letters are seen in silhouette against the brilliantly illuminated panels.

Within Hutzler's Towson are approximately 159,000 square feet of floor space. Of this total, about 92,000 square feet are used for selling and the balance for service areas and employee facilities. (2)

The Sun noted at opening time:

Some departments--chiefly those which cater to young people and young families--will be almost as big as their counter-parts in the downtown store, Mr. Hutzler said.

Inside the store, the designers have broken with the old gridiron pattern of department arrangement. The building has an L-shape, with escalators near the eastern and southern tips of the L, and departments have been arranged in a series of intimate groups, each distinguished by its own color scheme, decoration and floor pattern, but flowing into each other with a fluidity uncommon in department-store design. (3)

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The Evening Sun reported on the county seat's first multi-level store and its marvels:

All sales levels are connected with an escalator system. An escalator near the center of the east end of the store provides "up" service and one near the center of the south end "down" service.

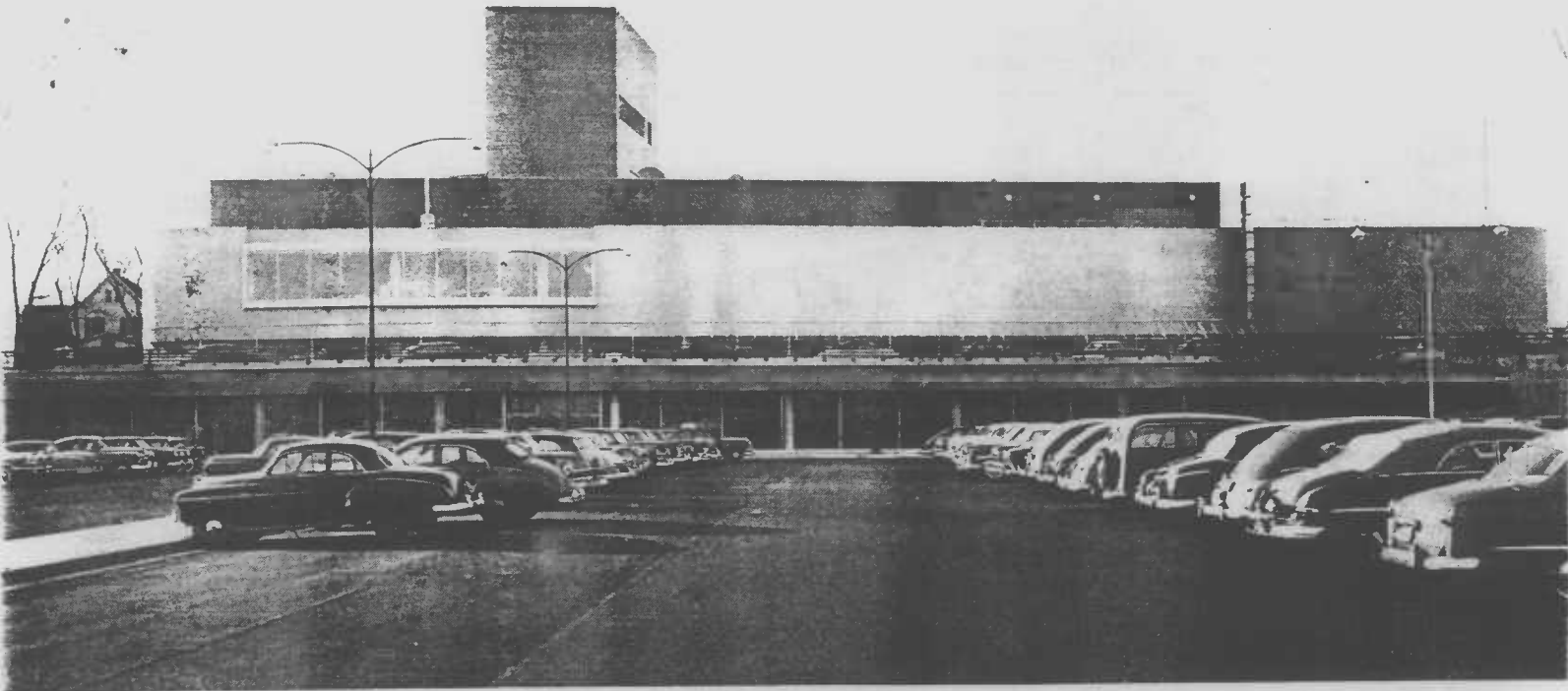
A passenger elevator in the rear of the east end of the store supplements the escalator service. (4)

NOTES:

1. Martin Greif, Depression Modern, The Thirties Style in America (New York, 1975).
2. "Hutzler's Towson Store Opens Nov. 24th," Baltimore, November, 1952.
3. Sun, November 25, 1952.
4. "Suburban Age Reflected in Department Store," Evening Sun, November 21, 1952.

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HUTZLER BROTHERS STORE



A view of the L-shaped Tawson branch of Hutzler Brothers, and of the customer parking lot.

The north facade depicted in Baltimore magazine, November, 1952



The 1952, "aerodynamic" view from the parking lot. Sunpapers clipping, in Enoch Pratt vertical file.

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1951-1952 **Builder/Architect** James R. Edmunds, Jr., et al

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

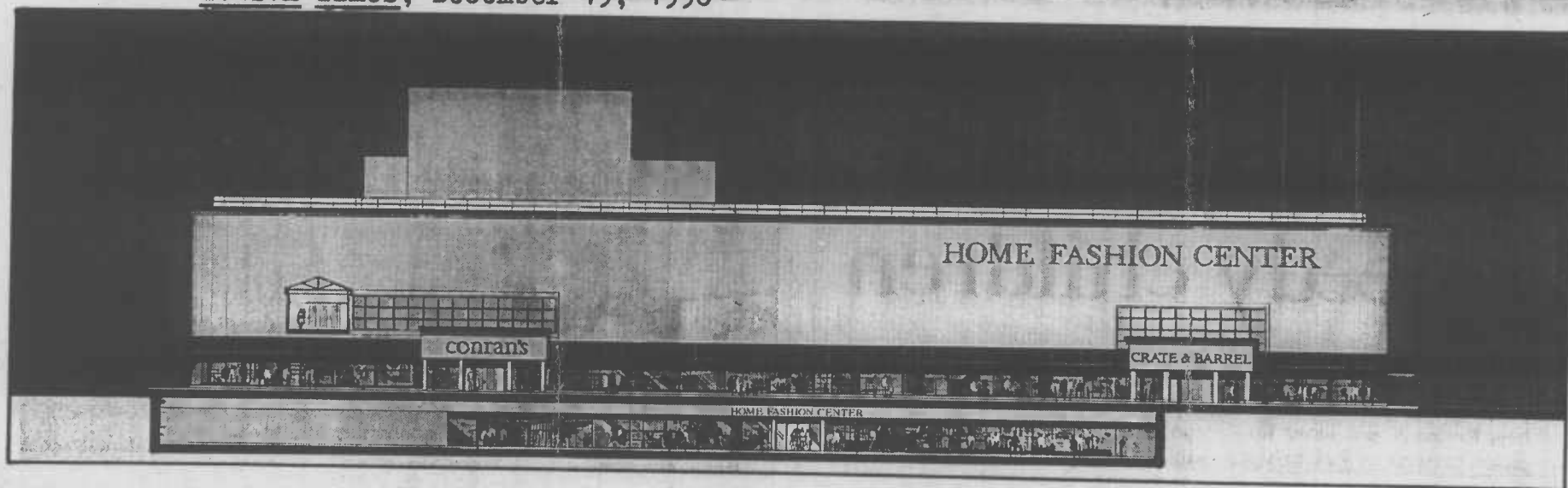
Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

In 1858, at the peak of Know-Nothingism in Baltimore and just a year after one of the classic financial panics, a small store called M. Hutzler and Son opened in the 200 block of Howard Street in downtown Baltimore. (1) Moses Hutzler had arrived from Bavaria in 1836 and he and his sons after him carried on successfully through boom times and bust at the old location, buying up more houses on Howard Street until 1888, when they were able to build the multi-story "Hutzlers' Palace," a many-arched department store designed in Romanesque Revival by Baldwin and Pennington; that store still stands but the original Federally style row house in which the company started gave way to the expansion. (2) The age of omnibuses, horse cars, and electric trolley cars made downtown the easy place to shop, and the lady of the house visited a variety of the great stores, each one known for some specialty. There were the five H's of shopping: Hutzler's, Hochschild-Kohn's, Hechts, Hub, and Hamburgers, not to forget O'Neals, Bernheimer's, Gutmans, Brager's, Epstein's, the May Company, and Stewart's--some the successors of other stores. But Hutzler's and Hochschild-Kohn's always seemed to be the top two, revered for service, daily delivery, and the indefinable "quality." Baltimore's stores were affordable to almost every class, at least of white people. The flourishing of the stores hardly suggested that Baltimore was in decline from a golden age.

In 1931, in spite of the Great Depression, the Hutzler family built an adjoining seven-story building in Moderne or Art Deco style at 212 North Howard Street, north of the Palace. Its architect was James R. Edmunds, Jr., and the "Hutzler Tower Building" opened in 1932. (3) The half-block full of Hutzler structures survived the Depression, the Second World War, and the post-war buying spree. Downtown was still wall-to-wall with shoppers willing to endure the congestion until in 1947, Hochschild-Kohn on May 7 opened a store at Edmondson Village, 4.1 miles west of downtown. (4) Shoppers were expected to arrive in some part by car, although the store was on a trolley line; by today's standards, there was remarkably little parking. Hutzler's had to counter Hochschild's two suburban stores, and on June 22, 1950, Albert D. Hutzler and a group of dignitaries broke ground 7.5 miles north of downtown at Towson to build a spectacular store to provide immensely more parking on one side, with a walk-in entrance a block from the Number 8

NEWS

Towson Times, December 19, 1990



A rendering by architects Kann & Ammon, Inc. shows what the north side of the Hutzler building could look like after Emporium Development converts it into a home furnishings center.

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street car on the other side. (5) The store became part of Towson's two-block, main-street business district.

Again, Hutzler's architect was James R. Edmunds, Jr., joined by the New York firm of Ketchum, Ginà, and Sharp, already experienced in constructing the new "suburban" type of store in New York and South America. Prime contractor was Consolidated Engineering Company of Baltimore. Store fixtures were supplied by the L. F. Dettenborn Woodwork Company of Hartford, Conn. (6) The contract was let on November 11, 1950. (7) Clearance of the site, a woods full of deer and moccasin flowers, had been in progress since July 1950, contracted to C. J. Langenfelder & Son.

The 20-acre parking location was the outer edge of Towson where trees had come right to the edge of Joppa Road. A small building called Epsom Chapel, dating from 1839, was demolished in July, that year. Most of the property had been purchased from Goucher College and before that had belonged to the Chew Family, relatives of the Ridgely's, prior owners of the whole neighborhood. The area south of Joppa Road contained some miscellaneous dwellings and a brick, cross-gabled house that had been Bosley's Hotel and, after the establishment of Goucher's suburban campus in 1942, had been the shuttle bus waiting station. The Towson fire house, originally Mary Shealey's general store built in 1879, survived the process and appeared in 1952 photos of the completed department store.

All the boosterism and hyperbole about the project was literally true, possibly understated. The company's spokesman called it "one of the most beautiful department stores in America," and the Sun, added to the report of opening day, "if this description seems slightly immodest, it is probably not too far from absolute truth." (8) The drift of population beyond the original city was already an observable phenomenon; one Evening Sun headline read, "Suburban Age Reflected in Department Store," and described the emporium as "Designed to meet the requirements of the automobile age and an expanding suburban area." (9)

The most brilliant idea was the shifting and widening of the Joppa Road, a two-lane blacktop State highway laid out on the bed of an Indian road. The new Joppa Road was built as a block-long ridge, and part of the ground floor of the store and a Wyman Shoe outlet occupied the space under the roadway. (10) The parking lot gave the customer the best view of the parallel bands of windows and clean, flat masonry, almost an aerodynamic feeling. The long bands of street-level windows were built not to display the merchandise but to show the brilliant interior. The owners reasoned that most traffic past the windows would be vehicular, the motorists un-

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discounted in the transportation forecast.

The store opened with the large lighted Christmas Tree on the roof, November 24, 1952. (11) It became a veritable mecca, famous for its lunch room, the place to socialize, and mill about in the fluid spaces. Eventually, the store had to expand from its original 159,000-square-foot floorspace. A parking deck was added in 1963, and in 1967, a new level and a wing increased the floor area by almost 50 percent. (12)

Hutzler's was for almost 35 years the undisputed store within miles of Towson. But in the mid-1980s, Towsonites could detect decline setting in, dirt accumulating in the corners, the fading away of superb service. The founding family had given up daily management. The store chain was obviously in incompetent hands and stories surfaced in the press about debt, selling off the land, closing branches, a veritable tailspin of corporate doom. (13) The Towson Times unhushed the secret with a cover story on October 12, 1988, characterizing the tea room as the haunt of a few loyal octogenarian ladies. (14) The following year was written up as "Hutzler's Last Christmas." Final closure took place January 28, 1990. (15) The following month, the parking garage was under demolition. (16)

The future of this building is not certain. It is owned by the Hahn Company of San Diego, California, and had no part in the plans for Towson Town Center, which opened in October 1991, with construction of its anchor Nordstrom store not expected until the autumn of 1992. (17)

Hutzler's has been proposed as an arts center, but at this moment, there seems to be no financing available. Towson Development Corporation supports the adaptation of the building as a complex for home decorating and furnishings, a project promoted by Charles and Laura Moore of Brooklandville. Architectural plans have been prepared that would restore some of the horizontal look to the building. That design was by the firm of Kahn and Ammon, an office that only recently dissolved. (18)

NOTES:

1. Isaac M. Fein, The Making of an American Jewish Community (Philadelphia, 1971), pp. 63, 135.
2. John Dorsey and James D. Dilts, A Guide to Baltimore Architecture (Centreville, Md., 1981), pp. 94-95.
3. Dorsey and Dilts, A Guide, pp. 94-95. Also, S. Cuchiella, Baltimore Deco (Baltimore, 1984), p. 8.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. BA-2543

John W. Hill, "Maryland Monuments of the Recent Past: A Quarter-Century of Award Winning Baltimore Architecture," in Three Centuries of Maryland Architecture (Maryland Historical Trust: Annapolis, 1982), p. 33.

"Hutzler's Towson Store Opens Nov. 24th," Baltimore, November, 1952.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.135

Quadrangle name Towson

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
E			
G			

B	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Entire block bounded by Dulaney Valley Road, Joppa Road, Delaware Avenue, and Shealey Avenue, Towson. Tax Map 70E, Parcel P153

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	John W. McGrain		
organization	Office of Planning	date	April 29, 1992
street & number	401 Bosley Avenue	telephone	(410) 887-3211
city or town	Towson	state	Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

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4. Edward Orser, "Flight to the Suburbs: Suburbanization and Racial Change in Baltimore's West Side," in The Baltimore Book (Baltimore, 1991), p. 218.
5. H. George Hahn and Carl Behm, III, A Pictorial History of a Maryland Town, (Norfolk, Va., 1977), p. 177. This book has an aerial photo showing two ordinary frame houses surviving at the northwest corner of Shealey and Delaware Avenues.
6. "Hutzler's Towson Store Opens Nov. 24th," Baltimore, November, 1952.
7. "Hutzler's Towson Contract Let," Sun, November 11, 1950.
8. "Hutzler Branch to Open Monday," Sun, November 21, 1952.
9. "Suburban Age Reflected in Department Store," Evening Sun, November 21, 1952.
10. Baltimore, November, 1952.
11. "Suburban Age Reflected."
12. Francis F. Bierne, Hutzler's, 1858-1968 (Baltimore, 1968), pp. 18-19.
13. Derek Reveron, "Hutzler's Sells Land in Towson," Evening Sun, February 4, 1987.
14. Loni Ingraham, "Hutzler's Tea Room," Towson Times, October 12, 1988.
15. Susan Thornton, "Hutzler's Last Christmas," Towson Times, December 13, 1989.
16. "Garage Being Razed for Park," Evening Sun, February 13, 1990.
17. Loni Ingraham, "It Was 'Show Time' at Towson Town," Towson Times, October 23, 1991.
18. Loni Ingraham, "Furnishings Center Proposed," Towson Times, December 19, 1990. Also, Emporium Development, "Decor Home Fashion Center Update to Towson Development Corporation," April 10, 1991 (supplied by Leslie H. Graef, Towson).

HUTZLERS/HISTORY

Last house
of Edwood Avenue
1401 York Rd.

↗

Towson Quad

(BALTIMORE WEST)
5562 (SW)



Mapped by the Army Map Service
 Edited and published by the Geological Survey
 Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Maryland
 Bureau of Control Surveys and Maps
 Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs
 taken 1943. Topography by planetable surveys 1944
 Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1957

